

MACAULAY'S USE OF LITERATURE

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courage and conduct amongst the enemies of his race. Another drama of the same kind is a tragicomedy on the siege of Mons in 1691^ and, finally, Macaulay cites a political play, performed at St. Bartholomew's Fair in 1693, which expressed the feeling of the people about the maladministration of the navy.

By this time Saint Bartholomew's day drew near ; and the great annual fair, the delight of idle apprentices and the horror of Puritanical Aldermen, was opened in Smith-field with the usual display of dwarfs, giants, and dancing dogs, the man that ate fire, and the elephant that loaded and discharged a musket. But of all the shows none proved so attractive as a dramatic performance which, in conception, though doubtless not in execution, seems to have borne much resemblance to those immortal masterpieces of humour in which Aristophanes held up Cleon and Lema-chus to derision. Two strollers personated Killegrew and Delavel. The Admirals were represented as flying with their whole fleet before a few French privateers, and taking shelter under the guns of the Tower. The office of Chorus was performed by a Jackpudding who expressed very freely his opinion of the naval administration. Immense crowds flocked to see this strange farce. The applauses were loud ; the receipts were great; and the mountebanks, who had at first ventured to attack only the unlucky and unpopular Board of Admiralty, now, emboldened by

impunity and success, and probably prompted and rewarded by persons of much higher station than their own, began to cast reflections on other departments of the government. This attempt to revive the license of the Attic Stage was soon brought to a close by the appearance of a strong body of constables who carried off the actors to prison.²

These instances show that Macaulay successfully employed the dramatic literature of the period to enliven his

¹IV, 1984, n. (xvii).

² V, 2372-4 (xx).